

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

In re the Application of: : Confirmation No.:  
: :  
Philip James IONS et al. : Group Art Unit:  
: :  
Serial No.: :  
: Examiner:  
Filed: April 12, 2004 :  
: :  
For: DIRECT SMELTING PLANT :

McLean, Virginia  
April 12, 2004

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Sir:

This Preliminary Amendment is being filed contemporaneously with the filing of a new United States patent application on April 12, 2004. Please amend the application as indicated below.

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the Listing of Claims which begins at page 3 of this paper.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin at page 11 of this paper.